



# The Growth of Global Election Disinformation: The Role and Methodology of Government-linked Cyber Actors

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## Current:

- Senior Intelligence Analyst at Nisos
- Adjunct professor at Florida International University (FIU)-Intelligence Fellowship Program
- PhD Social Psychology

## Former:

- OSINT: Department of Defense - US Southern Command
- Social Media Intelligence Analyst, Spanish Linguist, and Instructor at Dunami Inc. (Acquired by Babel Street)

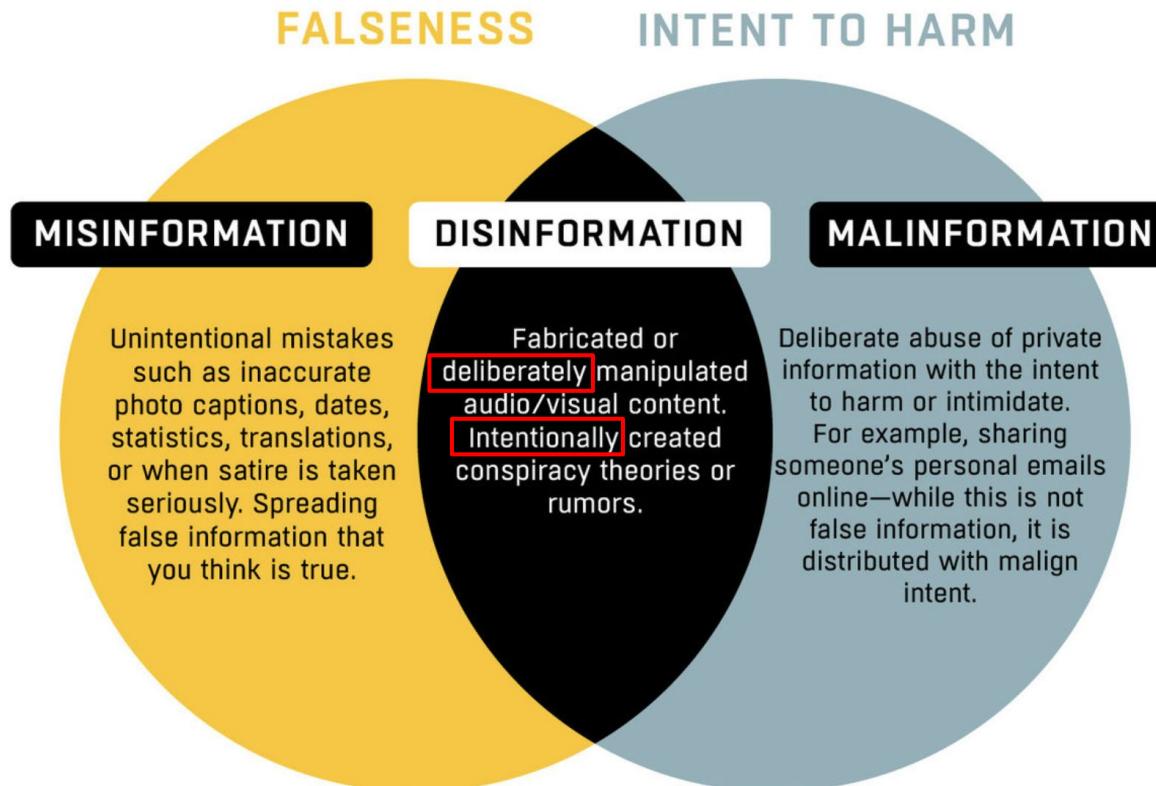


 @Dr\_SandraQ

- Disinformation
- Geopolitical Setting
- Discovery
- Content Analysis
- Attribution
- Motive Revealed
- Impact
- Post-Publication Behavior
- Key Takeaways



# Disinformation Overview



Content with the **purpose** of misleading the public is dangerous.

Intention

***Who*** and ***Why***



Disinformation thrives during **political unrest**.



The image shows a Twitter profile card for the account @ChalecosAmarill. The profile picture is a circular logo for 'CHALECOS AMARILLOS' featuring a yellow vest and the letters 'AYA'. The bio text reads: 'Por una vida digna de ser vivida' (For a dignified life worth living) and 'Regulación del precio del alquiler y venta de vivienda' (Regulation of rental price and housing sale). A 'Follow' button is visible. The account has 101.4K Following and 144.1K Followers.

**Chalecos Amarillos GLOBAL**  

@ChalecosAmarill

 #CloversForAssange  

  LINK  

#ChalecosAmarillos    ... nos organizamos

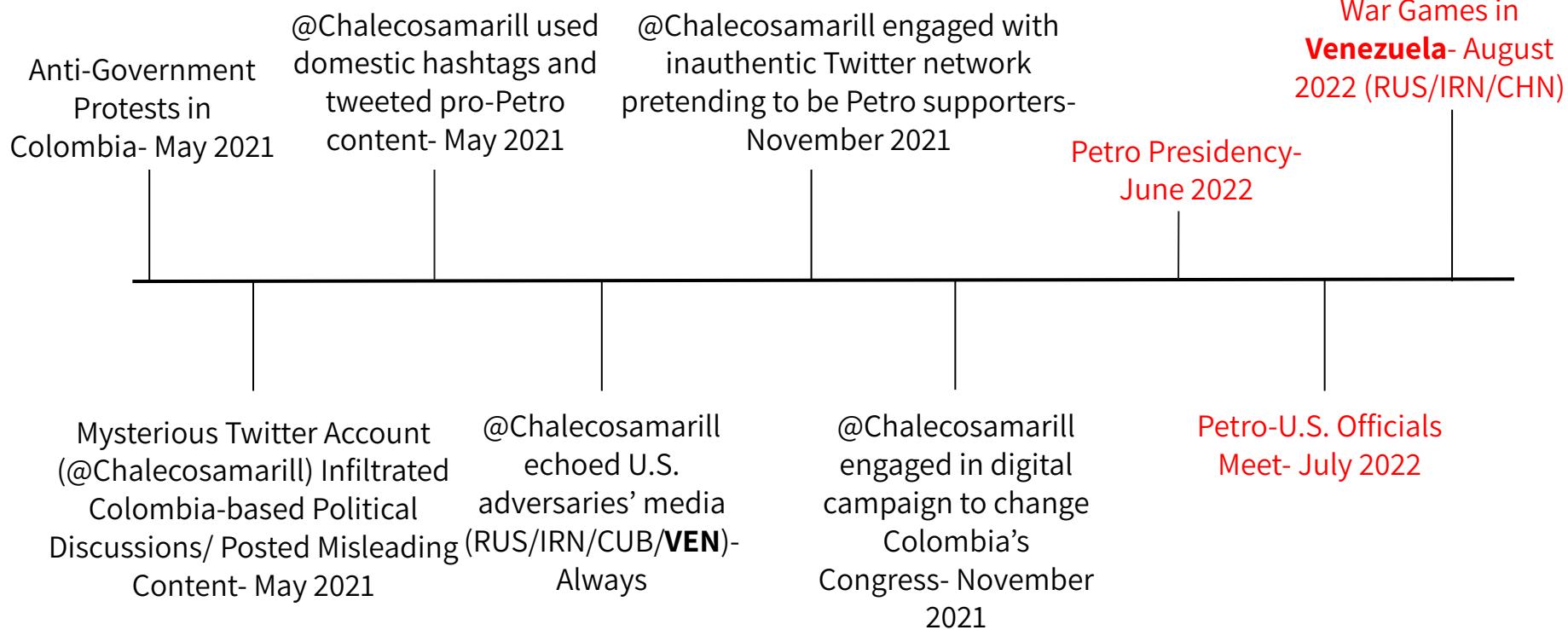
#YellowVests  we organize

Link  [t.me/GlobalRevolut](https://t.me/GlobalRevolut)

 Community  [t.me/GlobalRevolut...](https://t.me/GlobalRevolut...)  Joined December 2018

**101.4K Following** **144.1K Followers**

# @Chalecoamarill's Activities and Subsequent Events



# Background: Colombia

- Closest South American ally to the U.S.
- Collaborated on national security and economic issues
- Only country in South America that has never elected a leftist leader (until now)
- Aligned on political concerns involving the governments of **Venezuela**, Cuba, and Nicaragua



Photo Source: US Army

#BHUSA @BlackHatEvents

# Who is Gustavo Petro?

As of June 2022,  
President-elect of Colombia



Former Senator

First leftist president of Colombia

Friend of the FARC



Friend of the late Fidel Castro (CUB) and late  
**Hugo Chavez (VEN)**



# Latin America Increasingly Leaning Left

Government Ideology as of June 2022



# Petro's Stance Towards the U.S.

- Critical of U.S. economic sanctions
- Does not favor an anti-narcotics agenda
- Critical of extradition of criminals
- Promotes the rebuilding of diplomatic relations between the U.S. and **Venezuela**
- ***Question to you: Who else wins if Petro wins?***



## Hypothesis

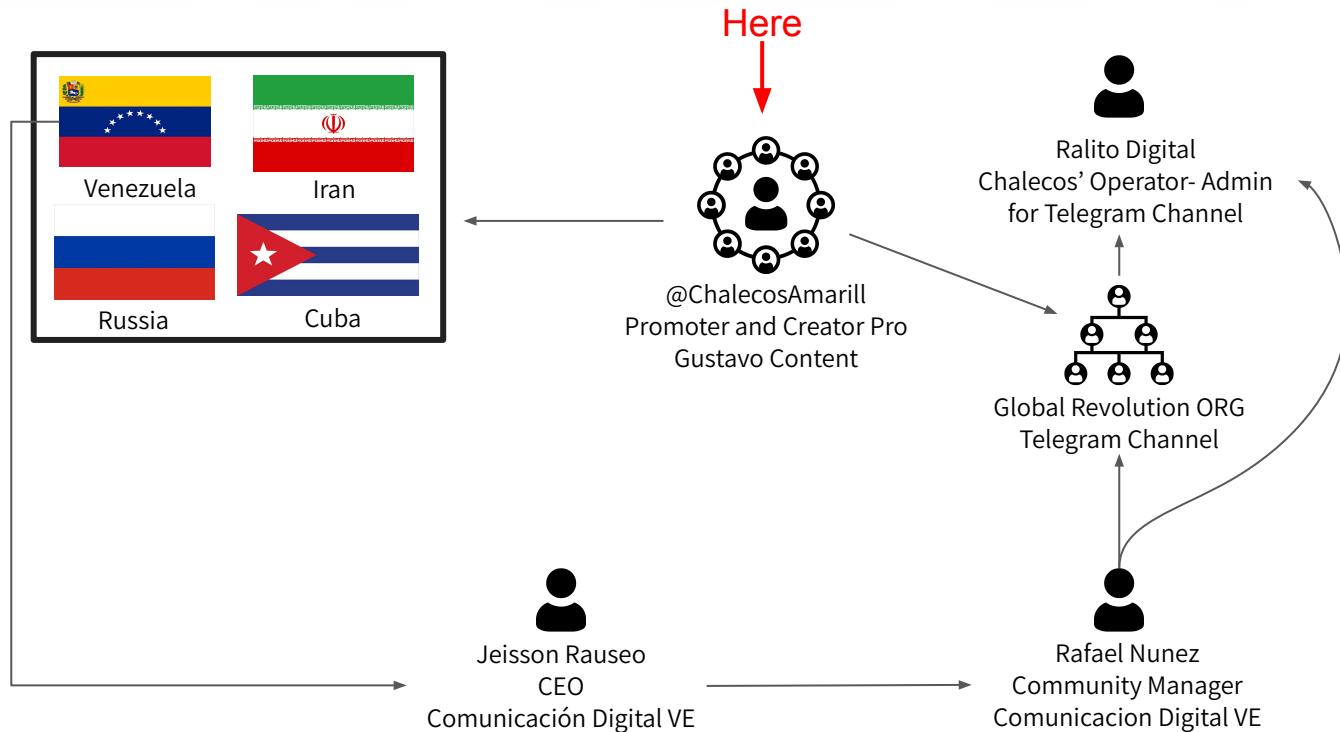
The **Venezuelan** government is attempting to influence perceptions in Colombia with the goal of achieving political change - getting Petro elected.

## Result

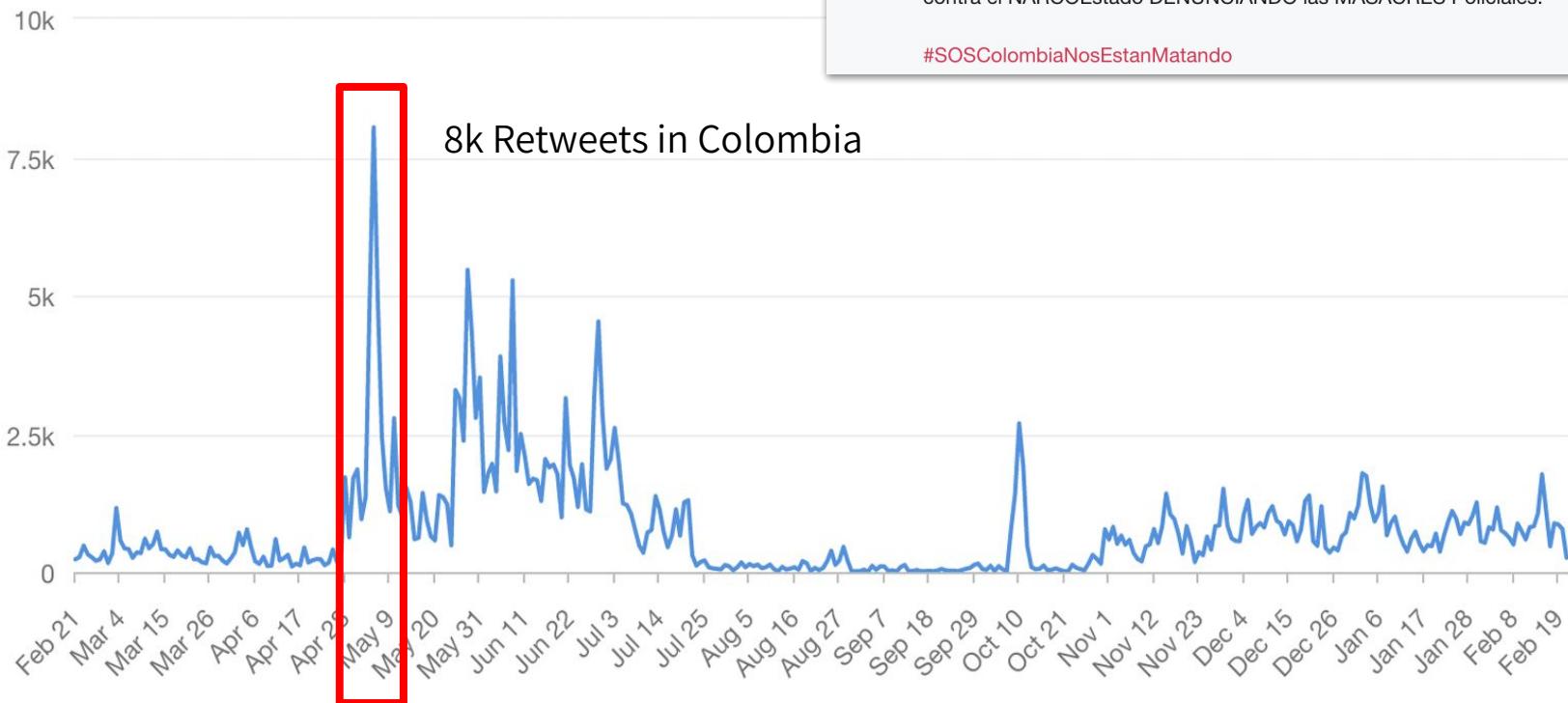
The government of Venezuela likely used a third-party firm to conduct and engage in information operations, to include disinformation, to help get Petro elected.

- **Who:** (Likely) Venezuela's Government
- **Why:** (Likely) Help soften U.S. foreign policy toward Venezuela

# The Network



# Discovery: Chalecos' Reach in Colombia on Twitter



©chalecos Amarillos GLOBAL **ANONYMOUS** @ChalecosAmarill · 1m  
🎥📷🔴 En #Colombia así fue la ENORME movilización en Bogotá de ciclistas contra el NARCOEstado DENUNCIANDO las MASACRES Policiales.  
#SOSColombiaNosEstanMatando

# Content Analysis



©chalecos Amarillos<sup>GLOBAL</sup> wĂÑOÑYMOgUŠn  
@ChalecosAmarillo

SOS #CloversForAssange SOS

🔥🔥LINK🔥🔥  
#ChalecosAmarillos 🇺🇸 🇦🇷 🇻🇪 ... nos organizamos  
#YellowVests 🇬🇧 we organize  
Link👉 t.me/GlobalRevolut

Community t.me/GlobalRevolut... Joined December 2018

101.4K Following 144.1K Followers

- No identifiable Info
- Large Following
- Interacted with community
- Echoed Venezuelan (and allied) state-sponsored news
- Interacted with suspicious accounts
- Active 22 hours/day on average
- Posted true, half-true, and false information
- Adopted domestic hashtags in target countries- COL in this case

# Content Analysis: Disinformation

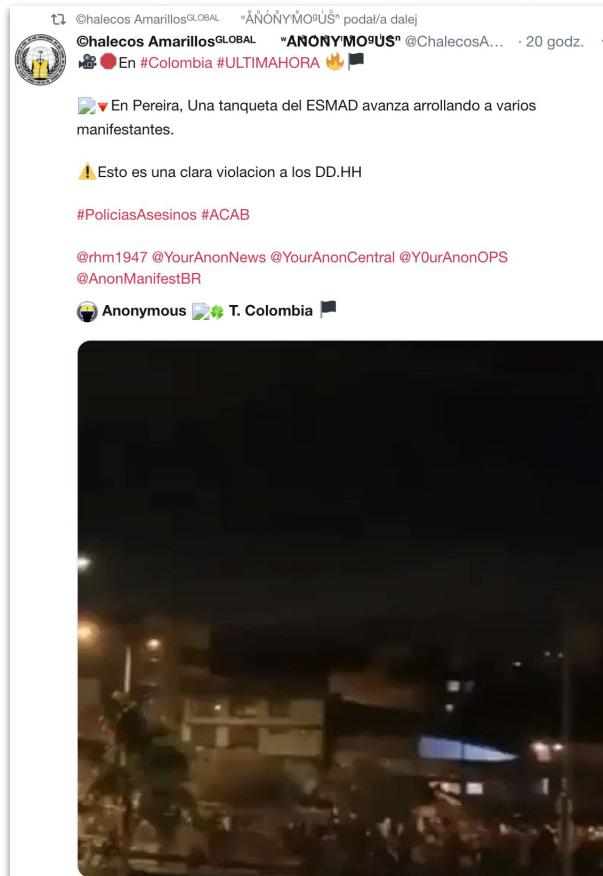
©Halecos AmarillosGLOBAL wĂŇONYMOgUŞn @C... · Jun 15, 2021 · ...  
In #Colombia here they clearly state that IT WAS NOT A CAR BOMB,  
the COMMUNICATION DRUG MEDIA@Weekly magazine @NewsCaracol  
HANDLE AS ALWAYS.

🔥 SHARE THAT YOU KNOW🔥  
Replying to @Team\_Game @FisicoImpuro @CMonteroOficial @petrogustavo  
@ActualidadRT



▶ 88.7K views 0:15 / 0:39 ↻ ↺

# Content Analysis: Disinformation



Chalecos Amarillos GLOBAL "ANONYMOUS" podal/a dalej  
Chalecos Amarillos GLOBAL "ANONYMOUS" @ChalecosA... · 20 godz. En #Colombia #ULTIMAHORA 🔥🚩  
En Pereira, Una tanqueta del ESMAD avanza arrollando a varios manifestantes.  
⚠ Esto es una clara violacion a los DD.HH  
#PoliciasAsesinos #ACAB  
@rhm1947 @YourAnonNews @YourAnonCentral @YourAnonOPS  
@AnonManifestBR  
Anonymous T. Colombia 🇨🇴

"In #Colombia #LastHour- In Pereira, an ESMAD tank advanced running over several protesters. This is a clear violation of human rights. #killercops"-  
**@Chalecosamarill**

## Colombian police tank did not run over protesters

By APRIL MULATO May 3, 2021



Click to copy

### RELATED TOPICS

AP Check

THE CLAIM: A video shows the moment in which a Colombian Police tank rolled over demonstrators who took to the streets in the city of Pereira on April 30 to protest against the tax reform promoted by President Iván Duque.

AP VERIFICATION: False. Although the authorities' tank did advance at a considerable speed while there were demonstrators in the area, the vehicle did not run over any of them.

THE FACTS: Through their Twitter account, the Colombian Police shared another recording of the same moment and in it you can see the tank making its way into

# Content Analysis: Participation in Pro-Petro Digital Campaign to Change Colombia's Congress

**“We are looking for five million votes for the lists to Congress”: Petro**

The senator from Colombia Humana gave way to the conformation of the lists in the Historical Pact.

12/14/2021

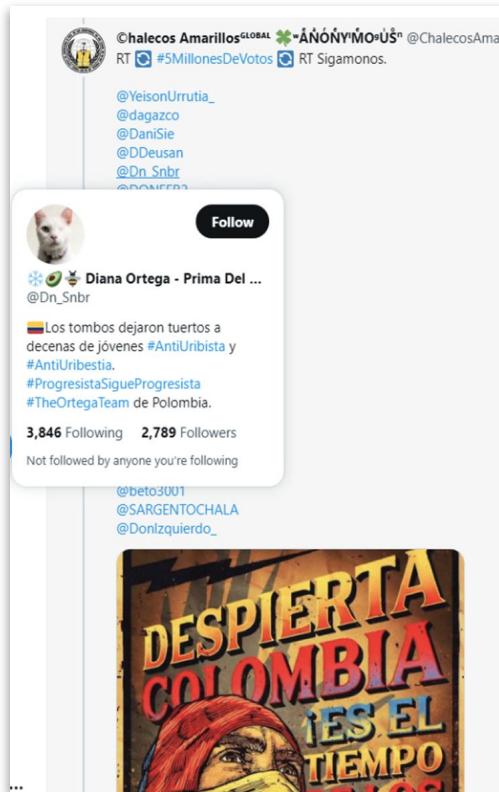


Gustavo Petro defended the conformation of the lists of the Historical Pact to Congress. - Photo: LEÓN DARÍO PELÁEZ SÁNCHEZ

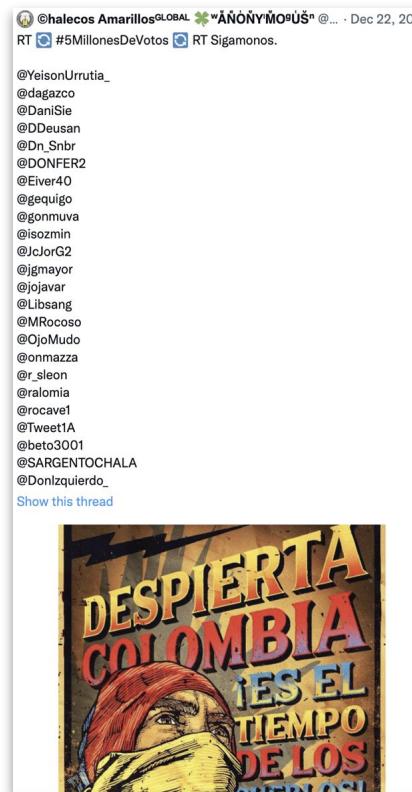
# Content Analysis: Influence Campaign Engagement

## Interactions with Inauthentic Network Engaged in Campaign

November  
2021



A screenshot of a Twitter interface. At the top, a tweet from a user (@ChalecosAmarillosGLOBAL) is shown, mentioning #5MillonesDeVotos and RT Sigamones. Below this, a reply from @DianaOrtega\_ (@Dn\_Snbr) discusses political protests. A third tweet from @ChalecosAmarillosGLOBAL is partially visible at the bottom. The interface includes a sidebar with user profiles and a main feed area.



A screenshot of a Twitter interface from February 2022. It shows a tweet from @ChalecosAmarillosGLOBAL (@ANONYMOUSH) with a similar message about #5MillonesDeVotos and RT Sigamones. The replies section is filled with many users, mostly @Dn\_Snbr, who appear to be spamming or engaged in a coordinated effort. A large image of a protest poster is displayed at the bottom of the screen.

February  
2022



Gustavo Petro   
@petrogustavo

...

If we want to talk seriously about work in Colombia, we have to talk about the possession of the land, the democratization of credit in the popular economy, the prioritization of production, the generalization of knowledge, it is the **avocado**, **the bee** and the pie

8:58 AM · Mar 1, 2019 · Twitter Web Client

745 Retweets 61 Quote Tweets 2,158 Likes





 Diana Ortega - Prima Del ...  
@Dn\_Snbr

 Los tombos dejaron tuerdos a decenas de jóvenes #AntiUribe y #AntiOrtegia.  
#ProgresistaSigueProgresista  
#TheOrtegaTeam de Polombia.

3,846 Following 2,789 Followers

Not followed by anyone you're following

# Content Analysis: Inauthentic Network Adopted Supporter Characteristics



@Human\_Youth | **human youth**

Colombia

We fight for a @ColombiaHumana 🇨🇴. We are the generation of the National Strike changing the history of 🇻🇪. Sign with @petrogustavo and the #Historic Pact 🇨🇴



@WilsonP725 | **Wilson Pérez**

Medellin Colombia

Math teacher 🇩🇪 Mamerto de Medellín 🇨🇴 #Antiuribista Silviofilo 🎶 Senderista 🏴 Defender of animals 🐾 #PetroPresidente2022



@Parcejul | **Julio**

Bogotá, D.C., Colombia

SOÑaDOR 🇻🇪 Colombiano Universal aBogado, el amor ❤️ Realiza All dreams ✈️ ✈️ ✈️ ✈️ Construise La Paz 🇩🇪 C I T O H 🇬🇧 R 🇺🇸 I O 🇪🇸 P



@carlosromerojai | **Carlos Eduardo Romero Jaimes**

Colombia

██████████ National University of Colombia, Bogotá / Firmitas, Venustas et Utilitas MVP / #AntiUribistaSigueAntiUribista #Historic Pact #Resistance



@\_Gelver\_| **Gelver**

Pereira, Risaralda

Overseer, Activist, displaced person, victim of the armed conflict. 100% Historical Pact 🇩🇪 #antiuribista Opinionist, sarcastic and sometimes ironic. #antiuribista



@ManuelPetrosky1 | **@Manuel Petrosky**

██████████ Let's fight together for the economic and social development of our country. For a more human Colombia 🇻🇪 let's proudly shout CuenteConMiVotoPetro 🇨🇴

# Content Analysis: State-Linked Media



@ChalecosAmarill  
Promoter and Creator of  
Pro Gustavo Content

© Chalecos Amarillos GLOBAL 🇨🇴 #ANONYMOUS® @ChalecosAmarill · 1h ago  
In #Colombia a truck carrying plainclothes officers opened fire on protesters in the west of Cali Thursday.  
▼ Protesters later found a yellow vest reading 'police' and equipment left behind in the truck.  
#SOSColombiaNosEstanMatando  
redfish

© Chalecos Amarillos GLOBAL 🇨🇴 #ANONYMOUS® Retweeted  
© Chalecos Amarillos GLOBAL 🇨🇴 #ANONYMOUS® @ VestsYellow · 7 a.m.  
That the only JUDGE for the WAR IN # IRAQ is a journalist for informing and not those who MASSACRED civilians Bush, Aznar and Blair should make us REFLECT on the international community, IMPUNITY and JUSTICE.  
#FreeAssange #WeAreAllAssange ...  
the other voice



## RT and Venezuela TeleSUR journalists unite to provide fresh perspective on news



RT's Spanish channel and pan-Latin American network TeleSUR in Venezuela launched a new joint project on Monday, aimed at providing a different perspective to Western mainstream media.

Titled "Venezuela and Russia. At gunpoint" ("Venezuela y Rusia en la mira" in Spanish), the project will feature a series of programs about the two countries and other international news relating to them. Broadcast as a telebridge, the format of the show will enable discussions between the studios on the two continents.

## Venezuelan President visits HispanTV facilities

Friday, 10 June 2022 19:54 [ Last Update: Friday, 10 June 2022 20:29 ]



# Attribution: Following Clues



  
@ChalecosAmarill  
Promoter and Creator of  
Pro Gustavo Content



Ralito Digital  
Chalecos' Operator- Admin  
for its Telegram Channel



Global Revolution ORG  
Telegram Channel

Por una vida digna de ser vivida  
Regulación del precio del alquiler y venta de vivienda

@chalecos Amarillos GLOBAL 🇻🇪 ANÓNIMO SOS  
@ChalecosAmarill

sos #CloversForAssange sos

🔥 LINK 🔥 #ChalecosAmarillos 🇻🇪 ... nos organizamos  
#YellowVests #we organize

Link ↗ t.me/GlobalRevolut...

Community t.me/GlobalRevolut... Joined December 2018  
101.4K Following 144.1K Followers

February 20  
@RalitoDigital admin  
Forwarded from @Raednure (@RalitoDigital)  
00:42 Si Rusia persiste en invadir Ucrania Bloqueo su

Iván Duque se está buscando lo que no se le a perdido con Vladimir Putin... FIN

# Attribution: Ralito Digital



**Ralito**  
 @\_Ralito

Marketing Político || Consultor Creativo en #RRSS || Ingeniería Social Inversa ||  
@ChalecosAmarillo GLOBAL  
"ANONYMOUS"

Venezuela  
 [instagram.com/ralitodigital/](https://instagram.com/ralitodigital/)

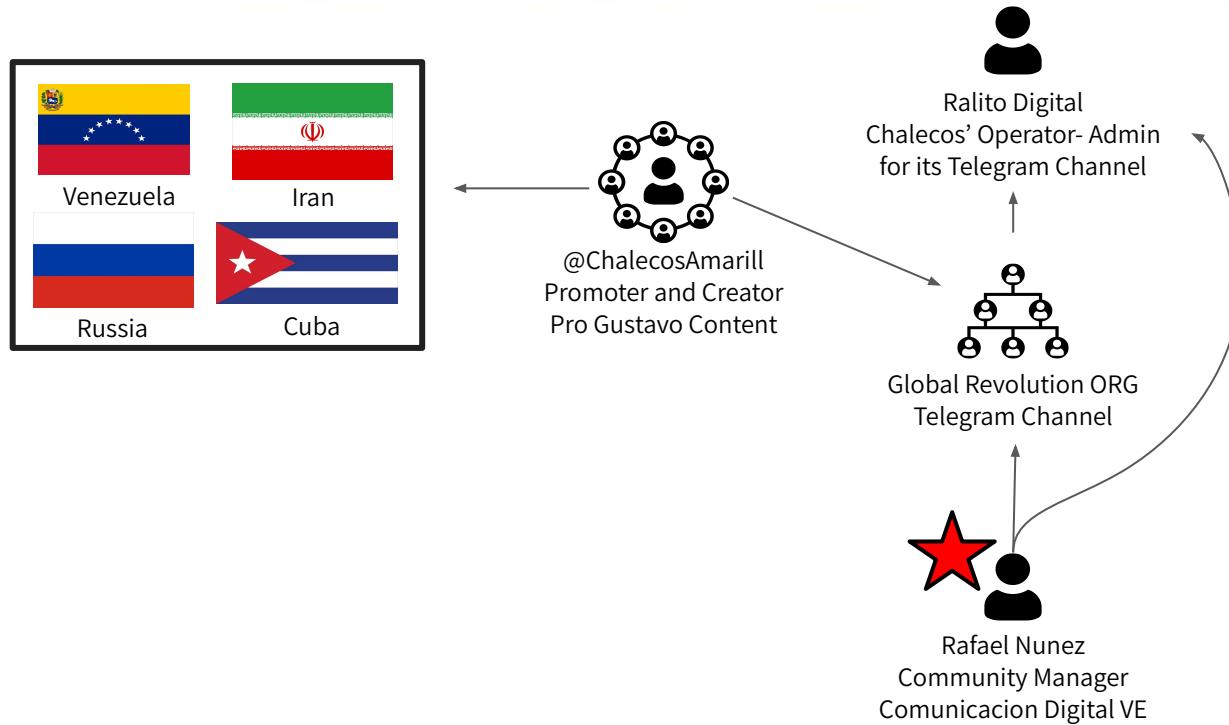


**@RalitoDigital**  
@RalitoDigital

Influencer Marketing Político | Sobre la situación de la crisis mundial de los pueblos En glutinosidad con los  
#ChalecosAmarillos 🇻🇪

Venezuela  
 [instagram.com/ralitodigital/](https://instagram.com/ralitodigital/)  
 Joined April 2010

# Attribution: We got a name!



# Attribution: Person Behind Ralito Digital



Rafael Nunez

Degree in Bolivarian University of Venezuela

Digital Communication VE • Bolivarian University of Venezuela

Venezuela • 93 connections

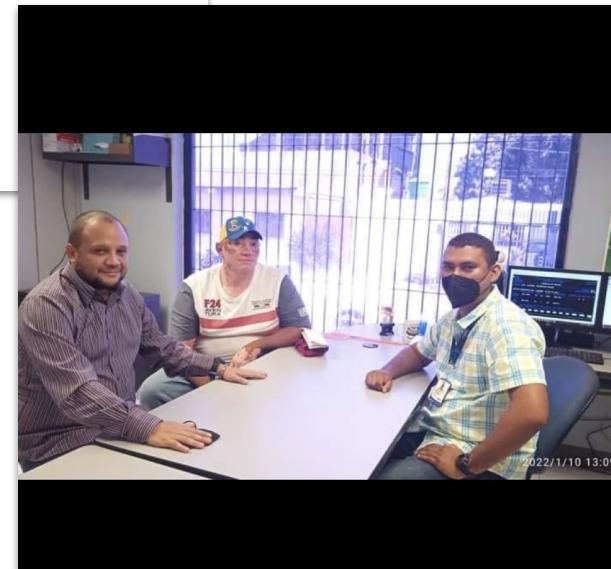


@RalitoDigital

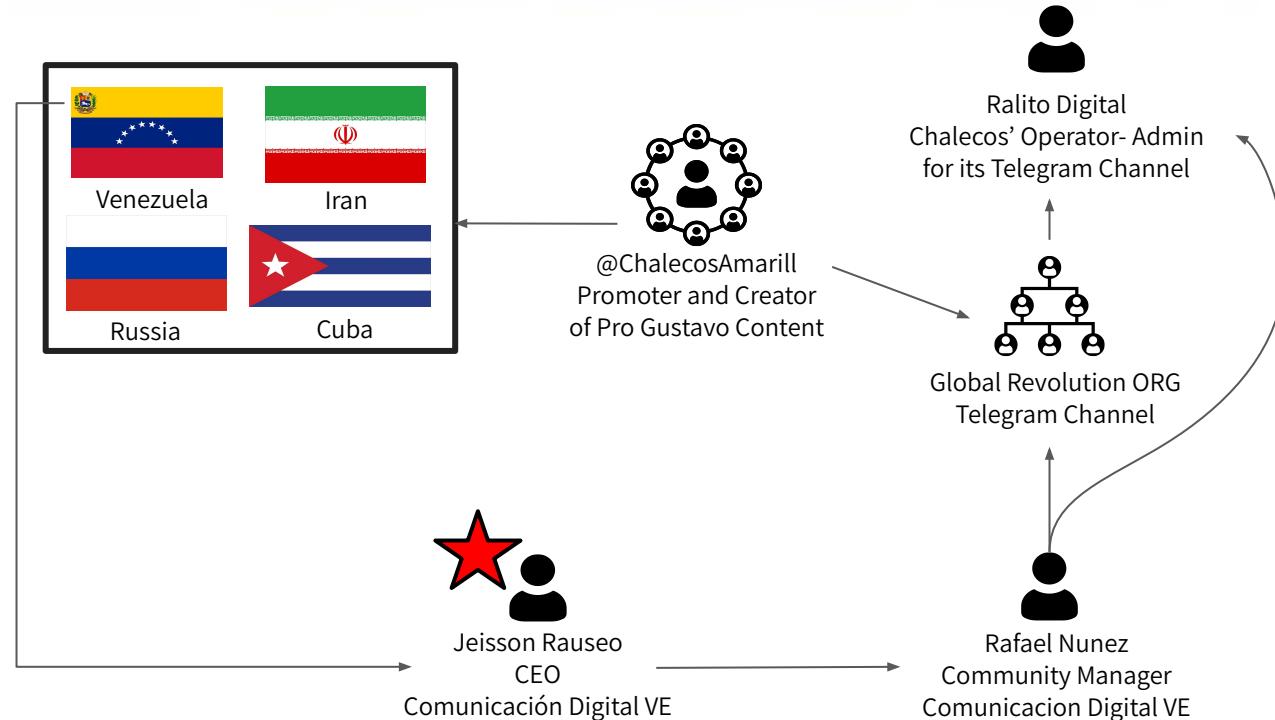
**@Raednure**  
@Raednure

Marketing Político Consultor Creativo en #RRSS || Ingeniería Social Inversa  
[Translate bio](#)

23 Following 144 Followers



# Attribution: THE Golden Nugget





Jeisson D. Rauseo  
Chief Executive Officer en Comunicación Digital VE  
Comunicación Digital VE  
Venezuela · Más de 500 contactos

- CEO of Comunicacion Digital VE- “Strategic and intelligent digital **marketing**”
- Formerly Director of Social Media at **Venezuela**’s Ministry of Communications and Information (MINCI)
  - “Retired” in 2016
  - Active government email- **Venezuela**’s National Institute for Socialist Training and Education

# Attribution: MOTIVE REVEALED

## Page transparency

Page information for Comunicación Digital VE ⓘ

 **Comunicación Digital VE**  
Internet company

### History ⓘ

-  Changed name to Comunicación Digital VE  
January 22, 2017
-  Changed name to Periódico Marketing Digital VE  
January 9, 2017
-  Changed name to Periódico Marketing  
November 24, 2016
-  **Created - periodico Patria Grande**  
September 21, 2009

Attribute	Value
WHOIS Server	+ whois.nic.ve -
Registrar	NIC-VE
Domain Status	-
Email	+ - - Telecomunicacionesdnsmaster@mippi.gob.ve (tech) Informacióndnsmaster@mippi.gob.ve (registrant, billing) Tecnologíadnsmaster@mippi.gob.ve (admin)
Name	+ admin-c: CON000020009 (registrant) - Coordinador de Telecomunicacionesdnsmaster@mippi.gob.ve (tech) Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Comunicación y la Información (registrant, billing) Dirección General de la Oficina de (admin)
Organization	+ - - Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Comunicación y la Información (registrant, admin, billing)
Street	+ - - Final del Boulevard Panteón (registrant, admin, billing)
City	+ - - Caracas (registrant, admin, billing)

→ Website: patriagrande[.]com.ve



# Attribution: Additional Links to Venezuela's Government



**JD Bartolo R**  
@JDBartoloR

**Followers**      **Following**

**Diosdado Cabello R**  @dcabellor   
Venezolano, Bolivariano, revolucionario y Chavista radical, en la lucha por la construcción del Socialismo

**PSUV**  @PartidoPSUV   
Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela, el partido más grande de la historia venezolana, el partido del pueblo y del Comandante Eterno Hugo Chávez.

**Jorge Arreaza M**  @jaarreaza   
Militante Socialista-Chavista-Bolivariano. ¡Patriota! Candidato de la Patria a la Gobernación del Estado Barinas. ¡Unid@s, siempre Venceremos!

**MIPCI**  @Mippicivla   
Cuenta Oficial del Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Comunicación e Información.



Petro was elected in  
June 2022



عربي

In

Fr

Common Group. Lebanese  
Al Manar TV



@almanarnewsSP

≡ MENU

HOMEPAGE

NEWS

SAYYED NASRALLAH'S SPEECHES

HEZBOLLAH STATEMENTS

FREQ

The last

opening of an Israeli channel in Morocco



The Russian Ministry of Defense announces

**Naval units from Russia, China and Iran will participate in a military exercise in Venezuelan waters in August**

Two weeks ago • July 7, 2022



Latin America - News - Venezuela

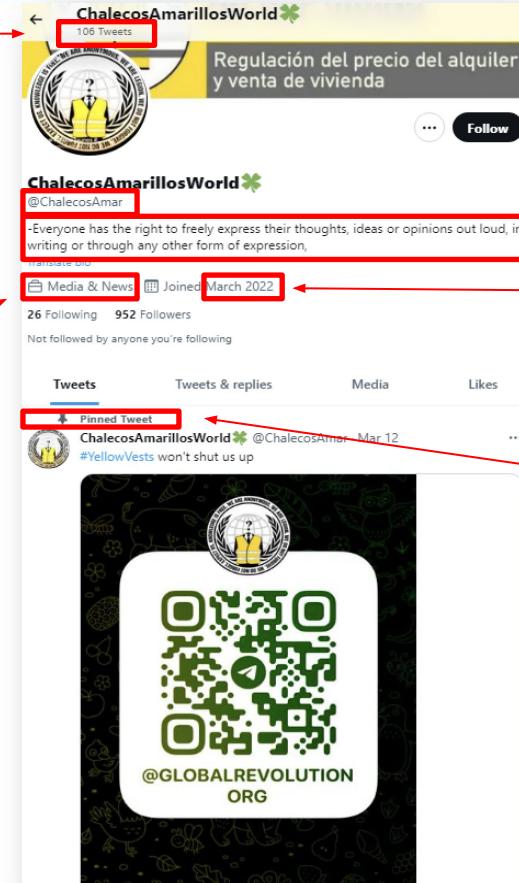


# Post-Report Behaviors

Variation of the Same  
Screen Name (Established a  
Brand)

...But its Operators  
Conduct “Political  
Marketing”

Less Active



New Account

Telegram  
Channel  
Upfront



# Post-Report Behaviors



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en #RRSS | Ingeniería Social Inversa |  
@ChalecosAmarillo GLOBAL  
ANONYMOUS

Venezuela  
 [instagram.com/ralitodigital/](https://instagram.com/ralitodigital/)



**@RalitoDigital**  
 @RalitoDigital

Influencer Marketing Político | Sobre la  
situación de la crisis mundial de los  
pueblos En glutinosidad con los  
#ChalecosAmarillos 🇻🇪

Venezuela  
 [instagram.com/ralitodigital/](https://instagram.com/ralitodigital/)  
 Joined April 2010

# That Moment When...

Información Chalecos Amarillos

Even when they suspend us they talk about us on Twitter 😊

🔥

<https://twitter.com/ElPitazoTV/status/1506103118706008066?s=19>

Twitter  
El Pitazo

Know! Nisos researchers uncovered a prolific campaign by Venezuelan left-wing organizations that are pushing narratives on social media in support...



387 12:29 PM

nisos-report-colombian-election-disinformation-campaign-2022.pdf  
16.0 MB

nisos-report-colombian-election-disinformation-campaign-2022.pdf

325 4:56 AM

From the report it seems that they have given an order to Twitter and paid to close my account to harm Gustavo Petro in the presidential elections in #Colombia.

In the report they call us a disinformation account and justify it by saying that we amplify news from other disinformation media such as Hispan TV, RT and Ina and call us allies of Maduro.

323 4:58 AM

26 March 2022

3 May 2022

Thank you, Cyberscoop!

Written by [Suzanne Smalley](#)  
Mar 21, 2022 | CYBERSCOOP

An influential Twitter account known as @ChalecosAmarill — [since removed by the social media platform](#) — also advocated for additional presidential candidates with foreign policy positions promoted by U.S. adversaries, including in Russia, Venezuela and Cuba, [according to the research from threat intelligence firm Nisos.](#)

**NTT DATA**

**Multi-Cloud Mayhem?**  
NTT DATA's Joe Kyle helps sort it out

[WATCH THE VIDEO](#)



GEOPOLITICS

## Venezuelan leftists took to Twitter in attempt to swing Colombian presidential election



1. Do not trust sources you do not know
2. Sources of information reveal motive
3. Digital actors engaged in Information Operations (IO) adapt
  - o One case is a snapshot in time, next time, methodology could be different
4. Think about IOs as marketing campaigns, which requires:
  - o Request -> Research -> Planning -> Operation -> Review-> New Request, etc.
5. Academics are studying how you “Fact Check”
  - o Adversaries can access this information and use it to deceive...



## INFORMATION OR DISINFORMATION? READER AND FAKE-NEWS

Research paper on " Media (media) and mass communications "

Zlokazov Kirill Vitalievich

Voroshilova Maria Borisovna

Zlokazova Julia Valerievna

CC BY 57 fifteen

## ANNOTATION

scientific article on the media (media) and mass communications, the author of scientific work is Zlokazov Kirill Vitalievich, Voroshilova Maria Borisovna, Zlokazova Yulia Valerievna

**The purpose of this article is to describe the reader 's subjective strategies for evaluating disinformation**

. The study was initiated by the problem of counteracting the growth of criminalization of the information space. The increase in the number of cases of fraud committed through **Internet communication** actualizes the issues of scientific counteraction to **information impact** on the audience. To do this, the article discusses the information **verification strategies**, their characteristics are given. The lexical, thematic and knowledge approaches to the assessment of facts are demonstrated, the features of their application are revealed.

Subjective **information verification** strategies are shown, which are a reflection of social practices and the individual experience of **the reader**. . The analytical, cognitive, social strategies of fact checking are described, the characteristics of their application, the specifics of their use in relation to different conditions and features of the information received are given. The role of trust as a subjective form of the **reader's**

**attitude is revealed** to the content and source of information, the method of obtaining it. In the course of empirical research, the distribution of these strategies is checked, and an estimate of the frequency of their occurrence is given. For the purposes of the study, a special questionnaire is being developed, and a statistical assessment of its reliability indicators is carried out. The study sample is 725 people, 47% men, cf. age 29.3 years, SD = 5.9 years. The sample consisted of residents of three constituent entities of the Russian Federation who have an education and work in the fields of industry, trade, education and medicine. The results of the study showed the prevalence of the cognitive **verification strategy** (54% of respondents) over social (39% of respondents) and analytical (16% of respondents). The most closely related are cognitive and analytical strategy (34% of respondents), cognitive and social strategies (29% of respondents). Sex differences in the use of strategies have not been established. It is concluded that it is necessary to further study the content of information **verification strategies**, identify the role of internal mechanisms that ensure their formation, as well as assess the effectiveness of strategies in distinguishing between signs of

**disinformation**.

1. Be suspicious of accounts with no identifiable info
2. Look for trends/patterns
3. Names are vital to an investigation
4. If you find something unexpected, it is probably worth investigating further
5. Follow clues
6. Historic data often provides new leads... targets' bad OPSEC does, too :)
7. Political neutrality during an investigation is important
8. Be supportive of your team- OSINT and mental health



# Thank You

Learn more at [nisos.com](https://nisos.com)

